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Rep. Shankland Responds to Governor Walker's Faculty Tenure Falsehoods

MADISON – Earlier this week, Governor Walker released a statement in which he referred to faculty tenure as a “job for life” and highlighted numerous misleading and outright incorrect “facts” about the UW System. In response, Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) released the following statement:

“Governor Walker can’t even keep his own facts straight as he attacks UW professors. The idea that there are only 2.8 students for every faculty member is laughable, and shows how out-of-touch the governor is. With a total enrollment of 180,000 students and only 6,384 faculty, the actual student-to-faculty ratio across the UW System is about ten times larger than what the governor claimed. Governor Walker should also recognize and respect the research, innovation, workforce, and economic development our faculty and staff contribute to – and realize that tenure is about academic freedom.

“Here are some other facts that Governor Walker would do well to remember:

- The amount of state support the UW System receives relative to its overall budget has declined significantly over time. Over the last 43 years, state support for UW-Stevens Point has decreased from covering 50% of expenses to only 13% of the core budget.¹
- Governor Walker and his legislative allies have cut the UW System by \$500 million, a total \$795 million funding reduction over six years.²
- Due to these harsh cuts, universities across the UW System are experiencing position cuts and fewer course offerings, causing enrollment bottlenecks that make it more difficult for students to graduate on time, thereby contributing to the student loan debt crisis.³
- UW System faculty remain underpaid, with UW-Madison full professors earning 12% less than their counterparts at peer universities. This has made it more difficult for universities to recruit and retain talented faculty and staff, causing the quality of education to suffer.⁴

“The governor’s false claim about faculty ‘jobs for life’ is the height of hypocrisy. Since Governor Walker took office, Republicans have repeatedly passed legislation to insulate themselves from public accountability and protect their own election prospects. They gerrymandered themselves into favorable districts, exempted themselves from John Doe investigations, replaced the Government Accountability Board with political appointees, and opened the floodgates for corporate election spending – all to protect their own jobs.

“Governor Walker, facts do matter. It would benefit you to fact-check your own claims before making condescending remarks about some of the hard-working people you represent.”

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¹ Source: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/cz1me5v86gbs8md/April%20Campus%20Budget%20Update.pdf?dl=0>

² Source: https://gallery.mailchimp.com/7126ec513f66440e67bfd72aa/files/1_18_16_ed_cuts_LFB_memo.pdf

³ Source: http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/local/education/university/across-uw-system-campuses-reduce-courses-advising-and-jobs-as/article_4e691a26-3930-557c-a8a9-c7ddb10b623d.html

⁴ Source: https://apir.wisc.edu/compensation/Faculty_Salary_Comparison_2015-16.pdf